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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /080 W
----------000904 071425Z /44/44
R 061408Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9736
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

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USEEC
USOECD

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y PARA FOUR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB UK
SUBJECT: BASNETT CALLS FOR LABOUR ELECTION VICTORY

1. AT A CONGRESS EXPECTING AN ELECTION WITHIN A MONTH, TUC GENERAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DAVID BASNETT EXPLICITLY CALLED FOR THE TRADE UNIONS TO "WORK AND VOTE FOR
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LABOUR" IN HIS ADDRESS IN BRIGHTON.

2. IN THE MOST OPEN, PARTISAN POSTURE GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS CAN RECALL IN A CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH IN YEARS, BASNETT DENOUNCED "THE OFFICE HUNGRY MEMBERS OF THE TORY FRONT BENCH," DECLARED THAT THE "POWER OF ORGANIZED LABOR IS HERE TO STAY," AND THAT CONGRESS

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"THIS WEEK IS TO CONSIDER HOW TO USE IT." HE CONTINUED THAT THE TRADE UNIONS HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A "SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLUTION OF SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS AS A WHOLE," INDICATING THAT THE TUC INTENDS TO PLAY A ROLE IN NATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY AND THE SOLUTION OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

3. BASNETT DID NOT REFER TO THE MAJOR DISAGREEMENTS OVER PAY POLICY WITH THE GOVERNMENT, OR INDICATE THE DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE OPERATION OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT WHICH DELEGATES MUTTERED ABOUT IN THE CORRIDORS. HE REFERRED TO UNEMPLOYMENT ONLY IN LONG RUN TERMS, APPARENTLY IN AN EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE CURRENT HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT AS AN ELECTORAL ISSUE. HE REFERRED TO, BUT DID NOT DWELL ON, HIS PAST REMARKS ABOUT WORK SHARING AS A SOLUTION TO UNEMPLOY-MENT.

4. HE CAST THE FUTURE AS "A DEBATE BETWEEN THOSE WHOSE PHILOSOPHY HOLDS THAT IF THE WEALTH ARE ALL OWED TO PAY LESS TAX, OR SPEND ON PRIVATE HEALTH SCHEMES, ON PRIVATE SCHOOLINQ OR MERELY IN THE PURSUIT OF ELITIST PLEASURES, IT WILL SOMEHOW FILTER PROSPERITY DOWN TO THE REST OF SOCIETY" IN CONTRAST TO THOSE "WHO BELIEVE THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY, DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY CANNOT BE SOLVED BY PRIVATE EXPENDITURES BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

ONLY BY PUBLIC METHODS THROUGH PUBLIC NOT PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SERVICE."

5. HE ANNOUNCED THE BRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HAD TWO OPPORTUNITIES:

(A) THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE REVENUES OF NORTH SEA OIL TO "CONCENTRATE ON THE LONG TERM MEANS OF CREATING WEALTH BY REGENERATING BRITISH INDUSTRY." HE DECLARED "THE CAPTAINS OF BRITISH INDUSTRY...WILL NOT TAKE THESE DECISIONS UNLESS THEY ARE PRESSURED TO DO SO." HE ANNOUNCED "THE GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE WILL HAVE TO INTERVENE MORE NOT LESS."

(B) HE DECLARED, "THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY IS TO KEEP IN POWER THE GOVERNMENT OF A PARTY WHOSE VISION OF THE FUTURE IS SIMILAR TO OURS...A GOVERNMENT...WITH WHICH WE CAN WORK...AND ACT BETTER TO CONTROL OUR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS...A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS HELPED TRADE UNIONS."

6. "THE NEXT ELECTION...WILL BE ABOUT OUR LONG TERM FUTURE...A FUTURE IN WHICH WE MUST MAKE THE FINAL ASSAULT ON DISCRIMINATION, INEQUALITY AND POVERTY."

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7. "TRADE UNIONISTS WANT...A STRONG GOVERNMENT, NOT ONE PREPARED TO ABANDON ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE EFFECTS OF BLIND MARKET FORCES AND THE UNFORESEEN RESULTS OF MONETARISM.... FROM THIS CONGRESS THERE WILL BE MANY MESSAGES TO TRADE UNIONISTS. ONE MUST BE LOUD AND CLEAR. IT MUST BE--WORK AND VOTE FOR LABOUR."

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8. COMMENT: TUC GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS EXPLAINED BASNETT'S SPEECH AS NECESSITATED BY A SPECIAL SITUATION RELATED TO THE POSSIBLE IMMINENCE OF A GENERAL ELECTION. THEY ESTIMATED THE ELECTION WOULD BE OCTOBER 5, ALTHOUGH ALL DISCLAIMED SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO THAT EFFECT. IT WAS NOTED THAT BASNETT AT NO POINT REFERRED TO THE STRONG FEELING ABOUT PAY POLICY AMONG

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THE DELEGATES. KEY GENERAL MEMBERS INDICATED THAT THEIR MAIN CONCERN, AND THAT OF CALLAGHAN, WAS FOR THE BRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT TO BE ON RECORD AS
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UNEQUIVOCALLY BACKING CALLAGHAN, DESPITE POLICY DIS-AGREEMENTS, IN ORDER TO RALLY THEIR OWN CADRES TO LABOUR. SUCH EXPRESSIONS WOULD PREEMPT CONSERVATIVE ELECTORAL EFFORTS TO POINT TO EVENTS AT THE CONGRESS AS EVIDENCING LOSS OF TRADE UNION CONFIDENCE IN CALLAGHAN. IT IS UNDERSTOOD CALLAGHAN, AT A PRIVATE DINNER LATE LAST WEEK WITH BASNETT AND OTHER KEY GENERAL COUNCIL FIGURES, WANTED AN ALL-OUT TUC PARTISAN APPROACH. TUC LEADERS EXPLAINED ON THE SAME GROUNDS THE FORMATION OF A TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR A LABOUR VICTORY. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE TRADE UNIONS HAVE FORMALIZED SUCH A FUND RAISING EFFORT IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THE LABOUR PARTY IN AN ELECTION (APART FROM THE USUAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY TRADE UNION AFFILIATES). THE TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR A LABOUR VICTORY, CREDITED AS BASNETT'S BRAINCHILD AND HEADED BY HIM, HAS AS ITS NUCLEUS EIGHT NATIONALLY KNOWN TRADE UNION FIGURES FROM ACROSS THE ENTIRE TUC POLITICAL SPECTRUM FROM JOHN BOYD ON THE RIGHT TO CLIVE JENKINS ON THE LEFT. PRIVATELY WE UNDERSTAND IT HAS INITIALLY PROMISED CALLAGHAN 500,000 POUNDS FOR THE CAMPAIGN AND IS AIMING FOR 2 MILLION POUNDS TO INCLUDE THE FUNDING OF A NEW LABOUR PARTY HEADQUARTERS. THESE FUNDS ARE INTENDED TO BE USED FOR LARGE CONVASSING ACTIVITIES BY TRADE UNION ACTIVISTS WHO HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO CONCENTRATE ON 103 SEATS CONSIDERED MARGINAL.

STREATOR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON14316
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780372-1144, D780362-1267
Format: TEL
From: LONDON USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 727ffa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
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Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1533513
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Subject: BASNETT CALLS FOR LABOUR ELECTION VICTORY
TAGS: ELAB, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/727ffa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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